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## Good Vibrations

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# Good Vibrations

BY KIANA ROPPE DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION EMERALD KLAUER

Explore the world of masturbation and sex toys: A modern take on education that will keep you coming back for more.

Sex has become a more acceptable topic of discussion in society and the media, while masturbation, a way of self discovery and pleasure, continues to be labeled as taboo. According to Amy Popillion, resident sexpert and senior lecturer at Iowa State, masturbation for both males and females was historically considered a moral problem. During the 18th and 19th centuries it was even considered a mental and physical illness. In fact, anti-masturbation gear, such as the pelvic constrictor for men, was invented to prevent the wearer from unconsciously masturbating while they were sleeping.

Masturbation is safer than sex—so long as bodily fluids are not exchanged during mutual masturbation—and it isn't physically, mentally or emotionally harmful. "[Masturbation] is one of the most widely practiced, yet least talked about behaviors," Popillion says. Masturbation is so widely practiced that other mammals,

such as dogs, cats and horses, do it, too.

Pleasure is an obvious benefit, and getting to know yourself and improving communication with your partner are pros as well. "It is also frequently recommended in sex therapy practices to help build a feeling of control over your body, feelings of safety and trust, and helping survivors of sexual abuse or sexual assault overcome the trauma they experienced. It can be used between couples who are coming to therapy due to sex-related issues in their relationship," Popillion says.

## Female vs. Male Masturbation

For women, masturbation is considered a "don't ask, don't tell" subject, often accompanied by guilt or shame. "Women are raised to believe that their genitals are repulsive and inferior to those of men," according to Columbia University's fact-based health website Go Ask

Alice. "[Women are] also encouraged to repress their sexual feelings until marriage, when sex is for the purposes of procreation and pleasing her husband."

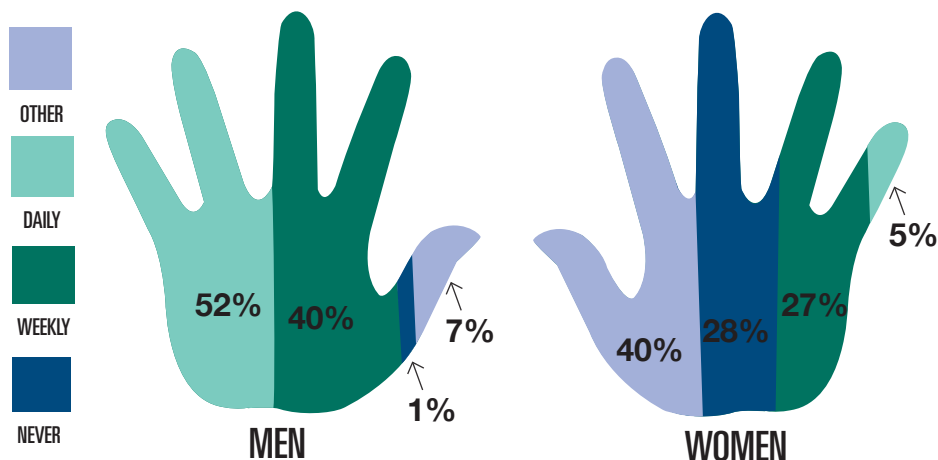
A sexual revolution organized by sexologist Betty Dodson in the '70s gave women the freedom to talk openly about their sex lives. Dodson threw Bodysex Viewing Parties, during which women would get together in the nude to learn about their own bodies, sometimes by doing a show-and-tell type exercise.

The goal of male and female masturbation is the same: self pleasure. However, the anatomy and social acceptance vary greatly. A major factor distinguishing the two is frequency. As an exercise in one of her classes, Popillion conducted an anonymous poll regarding the frequency of students' masturbation. The results showed 5 percent of women and 52 percent of men masturbate daily; while 27 percent of women and 40 percent of men masturbate weekly. Only 28 percent of women and 1 percent of men had never tried it.

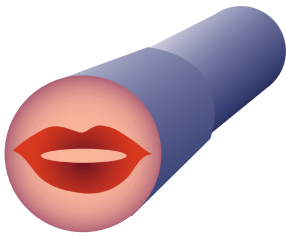
In episode 13, season six of the television comedy "How I Met Your Mother," Marshall wants to know whether or not he will be able to get his wife pregnant; He must provide the doctor with his sperm by masturbating to find out. "Why don't you pretend you're in high school, get back in that bathroom, and blow dry your hair," his dad suggests. Similar scenes have been played out in movies like "American Pie" and "There's Something About Mary," deeming male masturbation acceptable in society. In fact, males who don't masturbate can be seen as abnormal.

## FREQUENCY OF STUDENT MASTURBATION

The data was supplied by an anonymous poll conducted by Popillion and represents 320 students in her class.

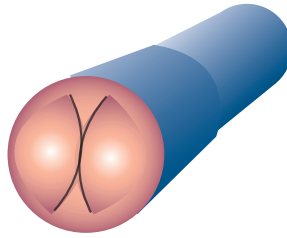


# Fleshlight 411



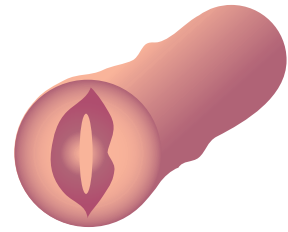
## The Original

Easy-to-use masturbation tool with a flashlight-shaped case and an inner insert.



## Fleshjack

Fleshlight made specifically for gay men.



## Pocket Pussy

A portable fast-vagina small enough to carry along with you.

## Vibrator vs. Fleshlight

In 2011, the movie “Hysteria” was released sporting the tagline: “He created an invention that turned on half the world.” In Victorian times, because masturbation was considered a sin, women who expressed symptoms of hysteria—including anxiety, nervousness and depression—were sent to the doctor to be manually stimulated to orgasm and thus cured. Mortimer Granville, a 19th century male doctor, found the task so tiresome and time-consuming that he invented the first patented vibrator.

Women’s use of vibrators has become more socially accepted since its introduction in 1880 by Granville and reintroduction in the 1960s during the Women’s Rights Movement. Vibrators are often shown in movies like “The Ugly Truth” and “Easy A.”

Vibrators are so mainstream that Laura Berman, Oprah’s sexologist, says mothers should buy them for their teenage daughters. “The reason I suggest a vibrator is because so many women and girls and adult women have a hard time reaching orgasm through self-stimulation alone,” she said during an on-air interview for The Oprah Winfrey Show. “This is just a way to normalize it and normalize sexual exploration.”

Vibrators come in many sizes, textures, colors and shapes, such as the “Rabbit,” to accommodate different women’s preferences. Pure Romance parties, where a variety of vibrators and sexual products are sold in the comfort of a host’s home, are considered modern day tupperware parties. The parties educate participants about their bodies, sex toys and how to better their relationships with their

sexual partners. Katie Drew, a Pure Romance party consultant, says she’s “never had a bad reaction to the party. Sometimes people have misconceptions: They think they’re going to a sex party, but when I show up in my business professional clothes, people are a lot more impressed.”

Fleshlights, made to aid in male masturbation, are less socially acceptable; Many people are unaware that they even exist. According to Popillion, a message perpetuating through society says a man who resorts to a Fleshlight instead of his hand or a lover’s is less of a man. Fleshlights, and their counterpart Fleshjacks for gay men, are made to simulate the feel of a sexual partner. They, too, can come in many textures, sizes, shapes and colors, even including an Avatar blue after the 2009 box office hit. Though these toys are rarely shown in any form of the mass media, the television show “Blue Mountain State” often features a pocket pussy, the Fleshlight’s cousin.

“Talking about sex toys and masturbation—or whatever it is that you want to learn about—is OK and helps you find out important information,” Popillion says. However, “just as important is talking with your partner.”

